

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 16 May 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
16 MAY 1968

1. Vietnam

Ambassador Bui Diem, Saigon's special representative in Paris, told members of the US negotiating team that he hopes "intermediaries" in the Vietnamese exile community will put him in touch with the North Vietnamese. He has not yet had any such contact, he said. His instructions permit him to meet the North Vietnamese--if they approach him first.

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A series of enemy mortar attacks and ground probes in South Vietnam's Central Highlands yesterday may signal the start of a Communist offensive in the area.

2. France

The government has already gone a long way in its effort to appease the rebellious students. It may have to go even further. The students and the opposition in parliament continue to demand the heads of the ministers of education and interior. Premier Pompidou is anxious to do all he can to take the steam out of a censure motion scheduled for parliamentary vote early next week. We do not expect the government to be voted down.

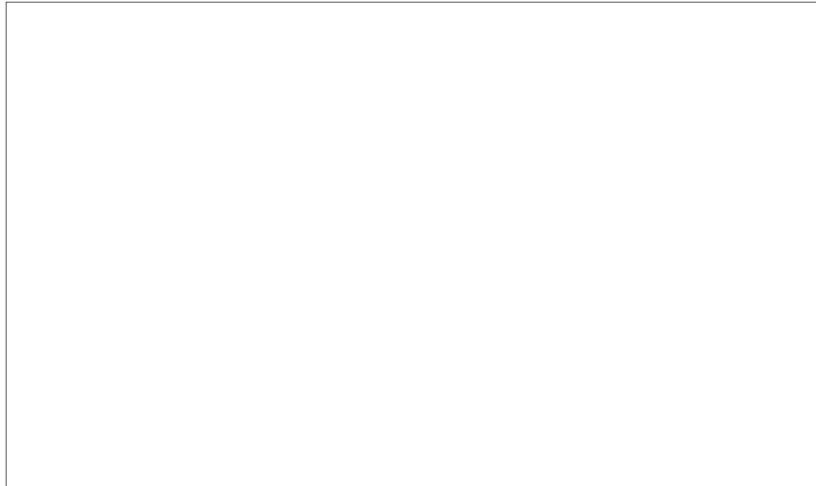
Signs of division are beginning to show up among the antigovernment forces. Some students and teachers, for instance, suspect the labor unions of exploiting the trouble for their own purposes. Also, the Communist and anarchistic flavor of recent demonstrations may well erode the public support which the students have had since the start of the demonstrations.

3. Czechoslovakia

Prague has again publicly reassured Moscow of its "permanent cooperation." Premier Cernik announced that Soviet leaders had been invited to Czechoslovakia, but that the visit will not be in "the nearest future."

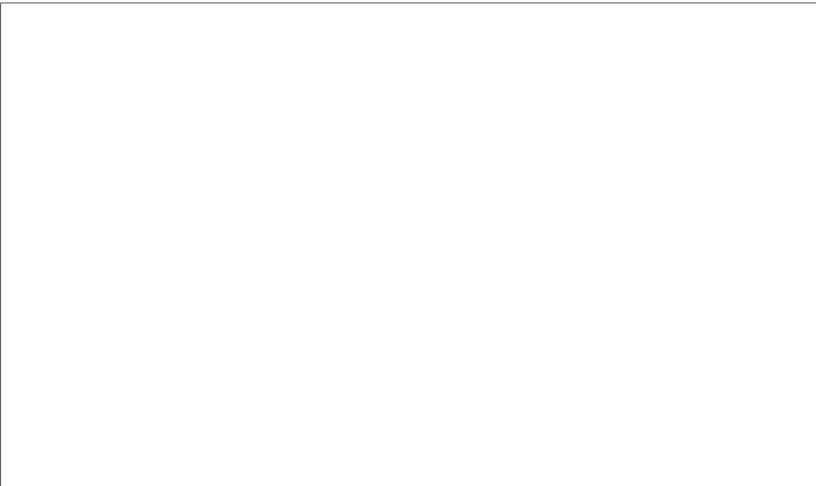
Cernik put it well when he responded to a newsman's question about outside pressures on the new Czech leaders. "It is polemics, not pressure," he said. "Perhaps there will be pressure later on; we do not know... but we are going to go ahead and do what we must, and we will see."

4. Greece



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5. Japan



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6. Dominican Republic

The US election campaign is already having an impact on Dominican politics.

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The Dominican Revolutionary Party is declaring that the end of the Johnson administration will inevitably mean defeat of the "reactionary" Balaguer government, which it calls a product of President Johnson's "policy of force." Last week Juan Bosch's successor as party leader publicly proclaimed his blessings to the "liberal" wing of the US Democratic Party--and impartially to Vice President Humphrey and Senators Kennedy and McCarthy.

7. Chile

The Communist Party joined with the big Radical Party on Monday in a declaration harshly attacking the beleaguered Frei government and calling for unity of action by all "progressives." The joint declaration is clearly an early success for the Communists in their effort to build a "Popular Front" to contest the 1970 elections. The idea will appeal to leftists in other parties, including the President's.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes

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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Rice Prospects Poor: Bad weather and inefficient use of labor reduced acreage for the spring crop. The May harvest will probably be about 200,000 tons below the prebombing average of 1.5 million tons. The North Vietnamese harvest two rice crops annually--one in October (the larger) and one in May.

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Chinese Aid Still Coming: Despite Peking's clear displeasure over Hanoi's decision to talk with the US, there has been no noticeable reduction in Chinese aid to North Vietnam.

The Chinese probably reason that any efforts to coerce the North Vietnamese through the aid program would only reduce Peking's influence in Hanoi.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Front Supports Poor: According to Western press reports, the chairman of the Liberation Front has cabled his support to the participants in the Poor People's March. The cable noted that the campaign constituted "an offensive against the ruling circles."

Hanoi Plays up Presence of American Students:
In its English language international broadcast on 15 May, Hanoi announced that four American students representing various elements of the antiwar movement in the US had recently arrived in North Vietnam. They were having meetings with officials involved in student affairs. The broadcast provided little more on the activities of the students other than to state that they talked with Vietnamese students about the peace movement in the US.

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Statement by American Professor Broadcast by Hanoi: In an English language transmission on 12 May, Hanoi broadcast a statement by Professor Robert Greenblatt, who is currently in Hanoi along with other American leftists. According to the broadcast, Greenblatt voiced his praise and admiration for the North Vietnamese and recounted in some detail the antiwar activities that have taken place in the US over the past several months. He concluded on the note that the revolution in Vietnam is assisting the progressive American people in conducting their own revolution to achieve liberty and freedom.

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